enumerated communities included in the Schedules to the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 and professing the Hindu, the Sikh and the Buddhist religion are eligible to draw benefits of Scheduled Castes.

(c) to (f) The issue of inclusion of Scheduled Castes persons converted to Christianity, in the list of Scheduled Castes has been considered by the Government in consultation with the Registrar General of India and the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and it has been decided not to accede to the proposal. The proposal for inclusion of Scheduled Castes converts to the Muslim religion in the list of Scheduled Castes, has been referred to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Demands of disability sector

118. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to stater

(a) whether Government agree that there is a need to look into the demands of the disability sector;

(b) if so, whether any steps have been taken in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI NAGMANI): (a) to (c) the Ministry of Social Justice and empowerment has occasionally received representations from disabled persons and organizations representing them. The demands cover a wide range of issues such as raising of limit of income tax exemption for disabled persons, no duties and taxes on aids and appliances meant for disabled persons, incentives to private sector to promote employment, facilities for mentally challenged persons, barrier free environment etc.

The demands relating to legislative, financial and administrative aspects involving various Ministries/Departments of Government of India and the State Governments have been referred to them. Customs duties on aids and appliances have been reduced and income tax exemptions have been enhanced by the Finance Ministry this year.